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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2903

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ETHICS

November 27, 1995

Robert A. Ridge
7 Colonial Drive
Auburn, New Hampshire 03032

Dear Robert:

Thank you for contacting me regarding tobacco regulations. I welcome the opportunity to respond.

I oppose President Clinton's proposal to use the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate tobacco products. In America, we are free to choose our lifestyles as long as they are legal, regardless of whether they are healthy. The Clinton proposals are an infringement on people's right to be free citizens, and I will vote against them if the issue is brought before the Senate.

Personally, I do not smoke or chew tobacco, and I believe that it is a serious health hazard. Curbing the use of tobacco in young people is an important goal, and one which I support. But I believe that the way to stop teen smoking is to heighten public awareness to the medical consequences of tobacco use. More bureaucracy and Federal infringement on personal freedom is not the answer. A number of constitutional scholars have argued that the FDA proposals restricting advertisement of tobacco products violate the First Amendment right to free speech.

Individual proprietors have every right to restrict tobacco use in their place of business. Ultimately, as fewer and fewer Americans take up smoking, I believe that more restaurants and businesses will begin to offer "smoke free" environments. Meanwhile, it is the responsibility of teachers, doctors, and parents to keep tobacco out of the hands of young people.

Again, thank you for contacting me. Should you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know. I value your input.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Smith, U.S.S.

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